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For Immediate Release
April 22, 2004

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Sen. Cassis: MDOT shouldn't trade new roads for new rides

LANSING – Sen. Nancy Cassis, R-Novi, is co-sponsoring several bills that would provide more legislative oversight to MDOT and ensure taxpayer money is being used responsibly.

The Michigan Department of Transportation's plan to spend \$5 million of funding on new passenger vehicles for MDOT employees instead of road projects like the Wixom Road interchange is irresponsible, Cassis said.

"Spending \$5 million on new vehicles when our roads are crumbling simply doesn't pass the smell test," Cassis said. "Rebuilding the Wixom Road interchange is critical to the health, safety, and economic development of the Novi and Wixom communities. I am appalled to see MDOT acting this irresponsibly."

Cassis has been working with local leaders and community members since 1997 to make the Wixom Road construction project happen. While in the House, she amended the MDOT budget to add a study of the Wixom and Beck interchanges and guided the project's inclusion into the 5-Year Road and Bridge Plan.

"The Department of Transportation often points a finger at Washington, saying they need more federal money to repair our crumbling roads and bridges," Cassis said. "Washington may have trouble taking us seriously when they see the state spending gas-tax money on new rides instead of new roads."

Senate Bill 1147, which calls for legislative approval of MDOT's 5-year plan, is currently before the Senate Appropriations Committee. A bill introduced today would require the State Transportation Commission to get legislative approval before issuing bonds for local projects.

"MDOT is an agency that collects taxes from everyone and reports to no one," Cassis said. "Antics like this make it clear that legislative oversight is needed to ensure taxpayer money is being used in the most efficient and effective manner possible."

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